

# *Awakening Democracy*

CAPaD – the Canberra Alliance for Participatory Democracy

OCTOBER 2019

Dear fellow democracy lovers

Welcome to our the first of our new look newsletters, *Awakening Democracy*, which we will be using to grow the network, share resources and keep you up to date on what you can do.

## What's coming up

**Getting a Better Democracy – a CAPaD Conversation:** bring yourselves and your friends to this public meeting and hear how communities have transformed democracy in Indi and elsewhere. All welcome!!

- ❖ **November 3<sup>rd</sup>, at 2pm to 3.30pm**, at St James Uniting Church hall, Curtin
- ❖ Hear Denis Ginnivan ([Voices for Indi](#)) and Millie Rooney (Australia reMADE)
- ❖ Followed by afternoon tea and a short Annual General Meeting (4pm)

This wonderful article from [Australia reMADE](#) tells the story of Indi, and [this one](#) describes innovation in Belgium that will also be showcased.

**Our call to action** Many of you want to know what we are doing to make change happen. Our call to action will answer your questions: What will a transformed democracy look like? What is “government with” And how will get there, fast? We will share that with you in our next newsletter, along with ideas about what each of us can do.

Our three CAPaD **action groups** are doing great work – contact us if you want to get involved!

- the [genuine citizen participation](#) group has done deep learning about citizen deliberation, in Canberra and elsewhere, and is exploring how to get citizen voice (citizen generated wisdom) into the ACT Assembly. Randomly selected groups of Canberrans can be diverse, wise, come to grips with complex policy issues and work for the common good - but the processes have to be independent of Ministers for the citizen voice to be heard. We are excited by the model in East Belgium where randomly selected citizens oversee deliberative processes, to keep them honest, and ensure the rest of the Assembly have to listen and respond. We are working with others from ANU and UC to spread our learning and explore what is possible here.
- the [MLA roles and responsibilities](#) group is unpacking what the job of “representing” is all about, and how we want them to engage with us. It turns out we want them to listen, and to act for us to improve things. The job of an MLA is part “social researcher”, part problem solver, part advocate and part policy maker - but how do we know if they are doing those things well, what decisions have we delegated to them and what are they actually accountable for? How will Canberrans expect the MLAs they elect in 2020 to do their jobs? Watch this space for the chance to explore these issues with others.
- [Connected communities](#) are critical for “government with”. In a transformed democracy citizens working in community will set the agenda and monitor progress – and if progress is too slow they will expect to know why and what to do about it. Communities across Canberra are getting on with things – including working together to define “what success looks like” for their suburb, Canberra and the planet – what we ourselves are accountable for and what we expect of government. Democracy starts in your street! We are working

with Communities @Work and local residents groups who want to try out different approaches.

## Be inspired!

Lots of people around the world are thinking and writing about how we transform the system – and the challenge of doing that faster than it can be dismantled.

In future newsletters we will share the things that have excited us the most... for now will just share three things – Peter Tait's [Neat summary of CAPaD's position on ideas to change ACT democracy](#), Sandi Keane's [Democracy has a future if we rethink it and remake it](#), and Tim Hollo's [How can we reimagine democracy?](#)

Thanks to those who filled in our recent member survey. We heard loudly that we need to do a much better job of communicate with you, our supporters. The Committee will be working hard on that and **our new look newsletter** is the first step. Please give us your feedback.

**Volunteer opportunities** – We really need expert help so CAPaD can connect with more people and transform our democracy faster! If you can volunteer any skills or time, please email the Secretary.

*Thanks, your CAPaD committee. See you on Sunday 3 November!*

**Contact us:** [secretary@canberra-alliance.org.au](mailto:secretary@canberra-alliance.org.au)

**Keep up to date:** <https://canberra-alliance.org.au/>

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